

MINSK NEWS

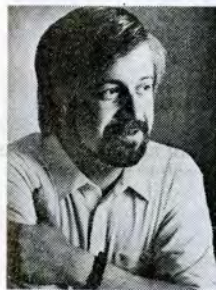
economic

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Belarus heading to elections

Racial problems on red island



By **Mikhail VOLODIN**
Editor-in-Chief

The conditions in Belarus today remind me of those in Japan before the 1869 revolution. Unfortunately, I do not mean Japan's tea ceremonies and Samurai traditions. Instead, I am referring to the plight of foreigners on our communist island.

After one year the Salvation Army is leaving Minsk. The reason for their departure is that they have been refused multi-entry visas. Belarus may have become the jubilant hundredth country, in which the Salvation Army was active, but this did not happen. Instead, registration was denied.

Beginning this spring, SWISSAIR will no longer be flying to/from Minsk. Temporarily, the Russian airline TRANSAERO has discontinued service to Belarus. Here, activities have been stopped for a different reason. Weak economics has decreased the flow of passengers. With its several weekly flights and landing field used currently by only 5 or 6 planes Minsk International Airport recalls a cemetery of unrealized dreams. The dreams were that Minsk would resemble Brussels for countries in the Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

It is not the case now; it probably will not be in the future.

Here is another example. The affiliates of Quality Schools International are active in many countries of the world including five CIS countries. Their goal is to educate in English the children of embassy employees, foreign business people, and others. In Atma-Ata their school has 65 children, in Kiev it has 50, but in Minsk, it has only 4. Foreigners choose not to bring their kids here. One of the reasons is that any step accomplished in Belarus demands too much energy. In fact, the Belarusian Government has been the only one in the world with which the leadership of the school has had problems in signing an agreement granting it the privileged status.

Registration is a serious, although not the only, method of bringing pressure on foreigners. There is one more tested expedient for fighting outsiders: charging them with espionage. It was all the rage during the cold war. However, it can be said that we have not been missing

these shibboleths. Recently one of the competent bodies mailed out a letter which lays direct accusations of alleged subversive and spying activities on some Soros Foundation - Belarus employees. However, we can find comfort in the fact that there are famous Belarusian nationals on the spy list alongside with foreigners.

We still have officials with an insular perception of Belarus. Two months after the adoption of the Belarusian Constitution this document still exists in only two languages, Russian and Belarusian. Most surprisingly, the idea of translating the Constitution into other languages has not yet occurred to the Foreign Ministry of Belarus.

This all speaks for the lack of civilisation in the republic's external and home policies.

As a result, the world knows next to nothing about the country.

Not so long ago on my trip to Nottingham, GB, I witnessed a demonstration staged by a dozen women protesting against the infringement of sexual minority rights. Anxious to know the reasons, I interviewed one of the ladies. In her turn, she asked me where I had come from.

You must have a lot of your own problems in Belarus, but I am sure that racial problems are the focus of your attention, aren't they? she said sympathetically. Well, I objected, there are more urgent ones. The lady raised her brows and went: Isn't the white population in minority in your country?

During my stay in Britain Belarus was only mentioned two or three times in the press, mostly in connection with the agreement on monetary union with Russia. I came across but a single reference to my country out of this context. An unknown pop-group sang about a forlorn place called Belorusse, as it was spelt in the CD programme notes. Farewell Belorusse was the name of the song, if I am not mistaken.

The only significant albeit fading clue which still reminds the world about Belarus seems to be Chernobyl. I do hope that the unwary policies of the Belarusian Government will not make it the only one.



Sergey GRITS

Monetary union with Russia gone amiss

Stanislav Bogdankevich, chairman of the National Bank of Belarus, finally voiced his opinion on the prospective monetary union with Russia in an exclusive interview for the NARODNAYA GAZETA newspaper on May 20.

"I believe the monetary union has gone wrong. It is only possible on the terms put forth by Russia. There appears no room for compromise. I regard Russia's conditions as absolutely unacceptable," said Mr. Bogdankevich.

His statement has revealed a major rift between the Government and National Bank.

The Head of the Parliament Legislation Board Dmitry Bulakhov has also criticised the Government for requesting a loan of BRB500 bln. This proposal by the Board of the Supreme Soviet to give the loan to the Government "runs counter to the Belarusian legislation on the National Bank, Banks and Banking system, State Budget and, ultimately, the Constitution", said Mr. Bulakhov.

Mr. Bulakhov also said "any law does not work if the Government Powers do not obey it."

These jabs at the Government from different sides may seriously damage the Premier's chances in the coming presidential elections.

Candidates: questions and answers

A team of young analysts from the Association of Humanitarian Technologies have conducted a detailed study of the Belarusian presidential candidates' platform and political goals. The research attempts to point out the candidate and platform that best corresponds to Belarus' current needs. This novel, though far from unbiased approach does the authors credit and makes the publication valuable for the reader.

The adoption of a new constitution gave a quick start to the presidential election campaign. Together with old political faces, new candidates are entering the contest bringing new programmes to the campaign. However, judging by their election platforms few of them are fully aware of the difficulties of a prospective president's commitment. If they were, none would have the same sort of enthusiasm.

As a group of analysts, we think it worthwhile to supply the intellectuals and the electorate as a whole with guidelines for assessing the candidates' abilities to solve the country's problems and for adequately placing them in Belarus' political system.

To do this we need to take a close look at Belarus' priorities, the criteria for analysing the candidates' political platforms and, finally, at the candidates and their teams.

The list of priorities

(still debatable among analysts and politicians)

1. Shedding of the legacy of the Soviet Union;
2. Institutionalisation of an independent financial system in the country;
3. De-nationalisation and privatisation of industry;
4. De-militarisation of the economy, ideology and public mentality;
5. Development of new institutions of law and order;
6. An overall restructuring of the country's economy;
7. Development of stringent guidelines for foreign policy;
8. Identification of the country's cultural and political priorities;
9. Restructuring of Belarus' mass media;
10. Promotion of the Belarusian culture and language;

The list of criteria for analysis

1. How do the contenders perceive Belarus' development as a nation?
2. How far ahead can the candidates predict the developments?
3. What is their vision of state control?
4. What resources can they mobilise to boost the nation's development?
5. How efficient are they at getting their message across to the public?
6. What are their guidelines for foreign policy?
7. How determined are they to carry their programmes through?
8. How flexible and responsive are their programmes to the country's current needs?

Please see,
What kind of President ...?
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On an old wheel into the future



Alexander GALKEVICH analyses the used car market in Belarus and makes an unexpected revelation that we are faring not that bad as it might appear at first sight.

More than 100,000 cars have been imported to Belarus over the last two years. In this respect Belarus has exceeded Moscow's showing with a car import volume less by 1.5 times. It must be mentioned that 1993 saw cars shipped three times as much as those in 1992. However, one half was re-exported to the CIS countries. Slightly more than 12% of the import accounts for companies and entrepreneurs which directly deal with car business. The rest applies to private individuals. PUSHE company is an indisputable leader among the companies which sell cars. The company's success has to do with, firstly, its right-chosen aiming at an average consumer and, secondly, its focus on SKODA cars. At the beginning of its promotion campaign PUSHE emphasized the edge of SKODA cars over VAZ cars in terms of quality. However, the cars manufactured at the Volga automobile plant found their way to the PUSHE showrooms dotted with the Czech cars. The availability of two very similar makes in the same showroom allowed the customer to make the right choice. At the same time this condition had a positive impact on the demand.

To confirm the above-mentioned information it can be said that PUSHE has left all the competitors far behind including SEGO+P+S, a Belarusian-German company. The reason is that SEGO+P+S pursued an absolutely different marketing policy. It dealt with brand-new or almost new cars and, therefore, lost considerably to PUSHE in terms of commodity and financial turnover. SEGO+P+S had opted for Japanese-made cars and, consequently, made quite a small segment of expensive car market all the narrower. According to the car market studies, brand-new or re-used Japanese-made cars brought

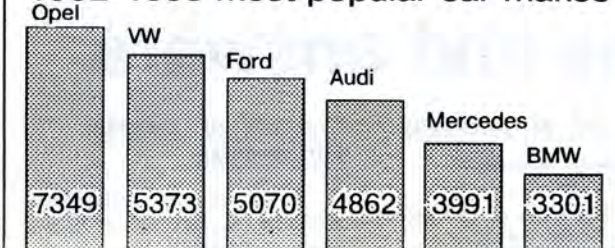
to this country accounted for 4.5% of the total import volume. American-made cars make up even a lower share on the Belarusian roads. Thus, Belarusian customers give preference to European car-manufacturers.

Of all the European re-used autos taken into this country OPEL holds the first strong position. It is interesting to know that car make priority differs to some extent all across Belarus. In Minsk, Minsk and Mogilev regions, OPEL stands atop whereas in Brest and Grodno Regions VW takes the lead. In Gomel and Vitebsk Region the preference goes to AUDI and FORD, respectively. These facts must be taken into account by the companies which supply spare parts for re-used cars. By and large, they do prefer popular and well-known cars in Belarus. Exotic cars like a plastic TRABANT or SIRENA as well as prestigious PORSCHE and JAGUAR are quite rare things to be seen anywhere in this country.

Changes in the declared value of cars brought to Belarus ran parallel to changes in the customs policy. Following a 100%-rise in duties imposed on foreign re-used cars in late 1993 the value of some car makes declared for the customs turned out to be a couple of dozens of dollars. However, prior to the introduction of new customs duties there were cases when some vehicles cost as much as \$3.5 trl. As far as budget organizations are concerned, the Executive CIS secretariat is the most vigorous customer which has purchased 48 cars worth of over \$1 mln.

A total import volume of re-used and brand-new cars in real prices has amounted to close on \$600 mln. This is not bad for a country where monthly wages run up to \$20.

1992-1993 most popular car makes



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A contract is better than emigration

The future of a sovereign Belarus and the success of its economic restructuring depend largely on its ability to maintain its scientific intellectual potential. Thus the "brain-drain" problem must be seen as among the most pressing of all of the state's concerns.

Until recently, the majority of emigrants from Belarus left the country on ethnic grounds. The number of emigrants swelled from 2,200 in 1988 to 34,100 in 1990, dropping back down to 5,600 in 1993. At the same time, the typical countries of destination of these emigrants changed. Israel's share of these emigrants fell from 54 per cent in 1991 to 37 per cent in 1993, whereas that figure rose from 22 per cent in 1991 to 52 per cent in 1993 vis-a-vis the United States. Emigration to Germany has also increased significantly - from 0.6 per cent of the total in 1991 to 7 per cent in 1993. The majority of all these emigrants left the country primarily on ethnic grounds, not for professional reasons.

This is likely to change.

Ethnicity will most probably lose its prevalence to employment as the grounds for emigration. However, the "brain-drain" should be tackled through state and social regulatory measures, not by the introduction of categorical bans on emigration.

The inclination of members of the scientific community towards emigration was documented in research conducted as early as 1992. The results of this research showed that more than 60 per cent of those questioned desired to work on contract abroad, but only 5 per cent expressed a desire to emigrate permanently. It is true, however, that these desires often differ greatly from actually transpires. A mere 5 per cent considered it realistic to find contractual work abroad, with 52 per cent conceding that such an event is a virtually impossibility.

The likelihood of finding contractual work abroad is diminished by a lack of solid contacts in the world scientific community and an inadequate knowledge of foreign



NESVETAILOV & Mikhail ARTUKHIN

For Belarus, the "brain-drain" problem is critical not only in its size but also in its impact, depriving the nation of its most promising intellectual potential - such is the opinion shared by the sociologists **Gennady NESVETAILOV** & **Mikhail ARTUKHIN**.

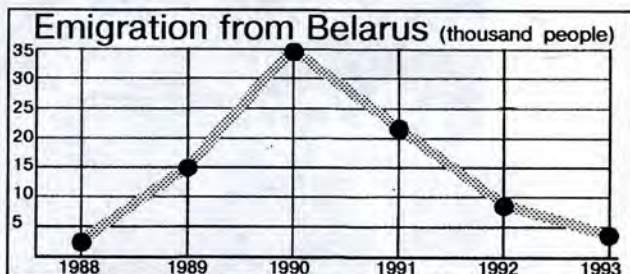


languages. Only 13 per cent of those questioned in the survey claimed fluency in any foreign language, with 37 per cent admitting a very weak language capability.

In 1993, when asked the question "Are you in a position to maintain contact with foreign organisations?" only 13 per cent answered affirmatively, with 43 per cent answering negatively. In fact, in the past three years only 19 per cent of those questioned have been abroad to take part at scientific conferences.

On the whole, there is as of yet no reason to speak of a significant wave of intellectual emigration from Belarus. This has been confirmed by numerous studies. For example, in 1993, from 38 institutions of higher education, only two professors and 13 doctors emigrated. At the same time, more than 40 scientists worked abroad on a contractual basis and more than 200 went abroad on temporary research projects.

Obviously, given the economic problems faced in Belarus at the moment, the "brain-drain" problem is likely to become more severe. It may be abated by new forms of collaboration between foreign scientific centres or firms and scientists from around the former Soviet Union. Research work conducted on contract at home might serve as the basis of such collaboration. Such a model is enthusiastically received by the scientific community in Belarus, especially among its older members. For instance, when asked why they expressed a preference for collaboration with foreign organisations, 58 per cent of the members of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus responded that they would like to be able to work in their own institutions while receiving hard-currency budgets from abroad. Only one-third expressed a desire to go abroad on contract or for research.



An inside look at the IBE



Although given a more or less regular press coverage of the developments at the InterBank Exchange (IBE), for the most part the public has been uninformed about the actual procedures and prospects of foreign cash trading at the IBE. **Alexander BURDA** tries to fill the gap of information.

Trading at the IBE

Each Tuesday and Thursday at 11.00 the eighth floor of a regular-looking building at 7 Kalvaryiskaya St (former Opanskogo St) houses a gathering of 35 or 40 smartly dressed young people, approximately thirty years old, who are the brokers commissioned by their commercial banks to participate in the trading. The monitors sit in the centre in front of the elevated tables.

With tenders handed in advance, the presiding monitor initiates the trading at 11.00 a.m. sharp. Dollar tenders come first. The current exchange rate and the number of buying and selling tenders (\$1,000 each) are announced as they appear on the flash board.

If the supply exceeds the demand, which is quite often the case, the brokers are requested to withdraw some of their selling tenders and add more buying ones. The brokers react instantly by filling in the tender forms and raising them for the monitor to see. After the forms have been handed in, the changes are announced and stored in the computer. If the difference between the supply and demand is still negative, the monitor raises the rouble to dollar rate by 5-10 roubles at a time, after which more lots are handed in and cancelled until the supply and demand are finally equalized. "Fixing, ladies and gentlemen" says the monitor and announces

the new exchange rate and the volume of transactions. This marks the start of a 5-minute break.

Although slated as a break, the brokers continue to work. They use this time in order to contact their banks and receive new instructions. The break is also the time when contracts are signed.

After the break, the trading rounds in DM (DM1,000 tenders), Ukrainian coupons and, finally Russian roubles (RUR100,000 tenders). Quotations of the Lithuanian litas, Latvian lats and Kazakh tenge at the Belarusian InterBank Exchange are still quite rare.

If the supply and demand are close the trading round lasts roughly 3-5 minutes; however, if there are big surges a round may last 30-50 minutes. All the trading is generally finished by 1 or 2 pm.

Transactions at the IBE

Economic entities are obligated by law to sell half of their earnings in hard currency within five days of their reception. This precipitates the question of how does hard currency find its way to the buyer?

With the client's authorisation, the bank will forward the required amount of foreign cash to IBE's account in VNESHECONOM-BANK. This has to be done within two days, otherwise the bank will be fined 0.12% per each day of the overdraft, an equivalent of 32% a year in

hard currency.

Currently, the IBE charges each client a rather hefty surcharge, 0.3%, in addition 1-2% charged by the bank. This charge will continue for two reasons: foreign currency transactions are expensive and the IBE needs new equipment. In order for this to change there will have to be a new agreement between the IBE and the banks.

In contrast, the IBE's commission on Russian Rouble tenders is a seemingly laughable 0.05%. However, the procedure and timing mechanisms differ from hard currency exchanges. In the first place, the IBE's bank account is not involved in the transactions; payments are forwarded directly from one bank to another. Although banks are then obligated to forward the payments within three days, there is no system to verify how long it will take before the recipient receives the payment. The process ranges from sometimes two weeks with the Bank of Russia to two days through TVERUNIVERSALBANK correspondent accounts. Unlike foreign cash payments, payments in Russian roubles are generally received within a week.

Ironically, the RUR-to-dollar cross-rate exceeds the BRB rate. This is a result of the recent mutual payment exemptions and extra bank loans authorised by the government. The bank accounts of state-run entities are bulging with BRB; hence, they can afford to buy BRB at any exchange rate.

BELARUS BANK, the authorised bank of BELTRANSGAS, accounts for up to 60% of the total sales and purchases of the RUR at the IBE. In the looking glass world of Belarusian economy the Government seems more inclined to weaken the local currency instead of supporting it.

The banks involved

Although eighteen to twenty banks are generally admitted, the "big six" take up the lion's share of all the sales; they are: AGROPROM-BANK, PRIORBANK, BELARUS BANK, PPOM-STROIBANK, VNESHECONOMBANK and KOMPLEX. Sometimes BELBUSINESSBANK also participates in this activity. KOMPLEX, BELARUS BANK and PPOM-STROIBANK are the main buyers in the InterBank Exchange. VNESHECONOMBANK and AGROPROM-BANK are the main sellers. Only, PRIORBANK sells about as much foreign cash as it buys.

The NATIONAL BANK of Belarus also is actively engaged in the process. It buys and sells approximately 5-15% of the total sum of traded hard currency and 40-50% of total sum of traded RUR. The main buyers of the RUR are BELARUS BANK (primarily for BELTRANSGAS) and PPOMSTROIBANK (for large enterprises).

Future plans

At least a third of the Republic's revenues in foreign currency is sold outside the InterBank Exchange, some even illegally. Such deals mostly involve investment companies who also would like to participate in trading at IBE. IBE's management is considering their admission to trading in loans and bills. Foreign cash trade at IBE will not be available for investment companies due to rigid imitations by the legislation. However, IBE will greatly enhance its standing in the business world if it manages to bring into the mainstream all those who want to operate legally but do not always have the chance to do so.

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What kind of President do we need?

Continued from page 1

The list of participants*

Stanislav SHUSHKEVICH.

Born in Minsk in 1934. Graduated from the Department of Physics and Mathematics in 1956. Doctor of Technical Science, correspondence number of the Belarusian Academy of Science. Elected People's Deputy of the USSR in 1989. Became People's Deputy of Belarus in 1990. Speaker of Belarusian Parliament in 1991-1994.

Zenon POZNIAK

Born in a village in Grodno Region in 1944. Graduated from the Institute of Theatre and Art. Candidate of Science in theatrical history. Research employee at the Institute of History, Belarusian Academy of Science. Dismissed in 1974. Readmitted as Senior Research Assistant in 1975. Leader of the Belarusian Popular Front. Elected People's Deputy of Belarusian Parliament in 1990. Leader of parliamentary opposition.

Gennady KARPENKO

Born in Minsk in 1949. Graduate degree in metallurgy from the Belarusian Polytechnical Institute. Research employee at Academy of Science for over 10 years. Doctor of Technical Science. Became director of a Powder Metallurgy Factory in 1986. At present - Mayor of Molodechno.

Alexander LUKASHENKO

Born in 1954. Graduated from the History Department at Mogilev Teacher-training Institute. 4 years military service as a border guard and officer in motorised infantry. Worked in agriculture, afterwards as deputy director at the factory of Building Materials in Shklov. Graduated from the Department of Agriculture at Gorky Agricultural Academy in 1985. Director of Gorodietz State Farm in 1987. Elected People's Deputy of Belarusian Parliament in 1990. Headed the Parliamentary Anti-Corruption Investigation Board in 1993-1994.

Viatcheslav KEBICH

Born in a village in Volozhin District in 1934. Graduated from the Belarusian Polytechnical Institute in 1958. Successively promoted from engineer to Director at Minsk machine-tool factory. Deputy-head of Minsk Municipal Communist Party Committee in 1980. Headed Central Committee Board for Heavy Industry. Nominated Head of State Committee for Planning in 1980's. Head of Government in 1989. Elected Correspondence member of International Engineering Academy, Department of Economics in 1992.

Vasily NOVIKOV

Born in Vitebsk Region in 1946. 2 years' military service in mechanised division. Graduated from Department of philosophy at Leningrad University in 1974. Professor of Philosophy at Gorky Agricultural Academy in 1974-1977. Started a career in the Communist Party in 1977. Head of Cherkov District Party Committee in 1984. Elected Member of Belarusian Central Party Committee on January 1, 1989. Headed the Communist Party Coordinating Board. Worked as Head of Personnel Department at Minsk Regional Executive Council throughout the period when the Communist Party was suspended by Parliament (Nov 1991-Feb 1994). Has worked in the only full-time secretarial position (out of 7) in the Central Committee of the new Belarusian Communist Party since Feb 1994.

1. The first question can be boiled down to whether the candidates perceive Belarus as a sovereign state or merely view it as a province of the former empire. A simple question with no simple answer.

Outwardly, all the runners-up have pledged their support for sovereignty, apart from Novikov who is still obscure on this point. For some, sovereignty is an urgent call of the time, for others it's a matter of expedience. Even Kebich will avoid discarding sovereignty, although his vision of it is similar to that of the former Com-

munist leaders of Eastern Europe who coordinated their every policy with Moscow's.

The two extreme views of sovereignty have come clear. Pozniak's view contradicts Kebich's whose version of it is tantamount to a silent reunification with Russia. Other candidates are somewhere in between. Shushkevich is closest, though slightly less radical than Pozniak. Kebich is the staunchest supporter of a union with Russia. Even Novikov is no rival to him in this respect. He is out of line with today's Russian politics, after all. Pragmatists are likely to slant towards Pozniak and Shushkevich, although some (e.g. Lukashenko) may vacillate to get some of Kebich's votes.

In any case, Pozniak and Shushkevich have already set the agenda on sovereignty and other candidates have to choose whether to support or to reject it.

2. Three to five years is held my many to be the optimum duration of a presidential term. A term of this length allows a president to start and complete quite a number of large-scale programmes and projects. This is the best stretch of time for one man at the helm to steer a country steadily towards its destination avoiding hidden rocks and shallow waters. This idea has been reflected in the Belarusian Constitution.

Times and strategies do not see eye to eye with either of the candidates. Take Kebich, for instance. A man from the past, a remnant of the old economic system, he is abjectly incapable of adequately predicting the developments even in the immediate future. His team does not even have a short-term programme, nor, it seems, is it capable of developing one. The agreement on monetary union with Russia, which in some of its paragraphs openly contradicts the Constitution adopted by Parliament two weeks previous, is but one example of such incoherence.

The lack of long-term planning appears somewhat less typical of other candidates. The Popular Front, for instance, has clearly defined its political objectives and goals. This is one of Pozniak's obvious strengths, which has nevertheless been marred by popular suspicion and mistrust.

Having clear-cut long-term goals and objectives increases the popularity of the Popular Front, leaving the public support for its leader, Zenon Pozniak, unchanged. For him, specific mid-term goals are more important. The bulk of the electorate's support will probably go to the pragmatists - the candidates whose long-term guidelines may be quite uncertain but who are a lot better at short-term and mid-term planning. Shushkevich and Karpenko are the most prominent figures in the campaign. Their performance at the elections is largely dependent on their ability to form a viable alliance with the Popular Front, on their readiness to submit their short-term and mid-term programmes for examination by an independent board of experts and to present their teams to the electorate.

None of the candidates appears ready for this course of action, which means that they are giving away their chances and advantages to Lukashenko, whose policies, which amount to nothing but popular placebo measures, may leave all the other contenders far behind in popular opinion.

3. The State's over-involvement in the traditionally deregulated areas of social life has been condemned by many sociologists. However, the contenders keep making ample promises of extending the frontiers of the state to spheres where the idea of state control has already been abandoned. Among such unrealistic promises is a commitment to re-establish control over prices, the distribution of capital and goods. The attempts to uproot corruption in social institutions that have long been rife with it are pathetic. It's like trying to pull yourself out of a swamp by your own hair.

None of the candidates has yet expressed his view of the role of the state. The candidates' vision of the state can thus only be inferred from their ideological orientations. Communists, for example, are notorious for their support of limiting every human right and freedom, business and every other conceivable area of social life by state power. Despite the fact that Novikov, the leader of the Communists, has been discretely taciturn on this point, his line of actions can easily be predicted.

As the rest of the candidates apparently share the hazy belief in an all-powerful president, one can speak of a markedly pro-Novikov slant in this issue. It will be fun to know the excuses they will make afterwards. Shushkevich's response to accusations of being passive as the speaker of Parliament is logically correct, though unconvincing. He says he had not been given enough political power. However, he hardly did anything to get this message across to the public.

4a. Belarus ranks 147th for investment security. Right now only the crazy and the desperate will invest here. Money is steadily trickling out to safer places.

Which candidate is most likely to attract foreign and internal investment? Money is not given away. It can only be raised through sales and bank loans for development programmes. Investing into communists is out of the question as they've got a durable record of confiscating money without much warning.

Other candidates deserve a more detailed consideration. Provided the monetary union with Russia works out (which is doubtful) Kebich's government will receive 2 billion Russian roubles. It is highly uncertain, however, what exactly is Russia paying for and what is the real price of what it wants to buy. Kebich had no investment programmes to offer at negotiations with Russia, which means that he is not likely to secure any further payments. So what exactly has Kebich sold to Chernomyrdin?

The National Bank of Belarus with all its assets (how much?)

Russian military bases in Belarus (how much?)

Exemption from customs duties (how much?)

The National bank alone may cost more than 2 billion, in which case Russia will have got the other two items for free. Alternatively, if the deal actually costs a lot less than 2 bln one can speculate about a secret supplement agreement which will require a number of additional favours from Kebich. So has Kebich sold it cheap or dear? It will come clear pretty soon. Anyway, the price of the deal has not-as-yet been realistically calculated and the information about it in newspapers can by no means qualify as reliable.

As Kebich himself advertises the deal as one of his main achievements he can be left out of further consideration. He certainly will not attract any further investment from Russia or elsewhere apart from the 2 bln Russian roubles.

Shushkevich, Pozniak and Karpenko appear most attractive to investors. We count Lukashenko out, as many of his ways make him akin to Communists and his team has not yet clarified its goals and objectives. Karyagin is also a likely candidate, albeit to a lesser degree. Their chances need a further analysis. Here we shall just mention Shushkevich's favourable record for attracting investment and Karyagin's and Karpenko's commitments to their lobbies which appear to be much stronger than Pozniak's or Shushkevich's.

All the four will need to make the Belarusian economy and investment a clearer and more predictable medium for prospective investors and creditors. Even though Belarus, like many other countries of Eastern Europe, is a highly promising economy for profits on investments, it is largely left out because risks are high, security low and profits uncertain.

4b. Which candidate will be able to get the intellectuals to participate in solving the country's problems?

Belarus has long ignored its intellectuals. The poor standards of the intellectual market just prove the fact. The candidate who is the first to realize the need to include experts into his team will gain a decisive advantage over everyone else. Intellectuals will support the candidate who is most likely to raise their standing in the newly independent Belarus.

Let us consider separately each candidate's ability to appeal to intellectuals.

Chances are pretty slim for Novikov. Communism is no longer attractive to intellectuals and professionals.

Lukashenko is highly attractive to marginal intellectuals and professionals.

Pozniak has some rapport with the intelligentsia, but he isn't likely to get active support unless he revises his attitudes. Intellectuals are suspicious of excessive ideology.

Shushkevich is actively losing his support among the intellectuals, although he is the one who is most likely to regain it. Outdated lines of political behaviour have put him in a rather shaky position.

Pragmatists (Karpenko, Karyagin, Kozik) are likely candidates for support among the intelligentsia.

4c. Which candidate will be able to offer the public a substantial plan of action and realistic goals? Only two candidates have developed mature ideologies. Pozniak professes nationalism, Novikov is a supporter of communism. Unlike communism, whose social base is declining, nationalism is expanding and is likely to continue to do so in the future. Their popularity is unevenly spread among the people of different ages and generations. Both candidates are therefore likely to campaign in their own domains, which substantially equalises their chances.

Kebich and Lukashenko have come up with nothing but populist demands for order and fair retribution, opportunism and return to the past.

These principles are not viable in the long run but may be extremely useful at the moment. The other candidates do nothing but try to outflank each other either in populism or pragmatism. Pragmatism is more attractive of the two, but it requires a great deal of professional and intellectual effort which none of the candidates is capable of.

4d. Which candidate, having pledged support for workers, will also care for business, the young, the war veterans and the victims of Chernobyl? How do the candidates perceive the structure of the Belarusian society?

Their appeals to separate social groups are not specific. Belarusian politicians are ignorant of the layout of the society and none of the candidates has thought of commissioning experts to do researching this field in good time. Opinion polls are not to be trusted. The lack of a sociological feedback increases the chances of populist contenders who will play on the electorate's instincts, prejudices and dogmas.

5. Does either of the candidates have a message that is likely to find a favourable response with the electorate? What is this country for? If sovereignty is nothing but a political maneuver, why does the country need a president? Is it really worthwhile to elect a president who is likely to become the governor of the North-Western Province of Russia? Do the people want a president with a hidden agenda in his mind? These are the questions we all have to ask to test the sincerity of every candidate.

Belarus has not had its ideology for 130 years. The concepts and goals of nationalism are still undefined, so it cannot fill the gap. Pozniak nevertheless has considerable

advantages over every other candidate. Emphasizing the need for sovereignty remains the only viable option for the candidates to get more votes. However, by doing so, they will increase the chances of Zenon Pozniak. Alternatively, they may side with the supporters of a union with Russia seeking the position of a lame-duck President. In this case they risk finding themselves in the uncomfortable position of Vyacheslav Kebich who is already experiencing political isolation. To avoid this risk, they will have to oppose Kebich.

6. Belarus cannot afford to live in political isolation. Extensive economic and political links with other countries is a precondition of a wealthy nation.

In terms of foreign policy Shushkevich is the best choice. His demands for neutrality, a nuclear-free status, demilitarisation, supported by his high political standing will help him pursue a foreign policy which will be advantageous for Belarus and free from excessive commitments.

Kebich's popularity almost matches that of Shushkevich, although until recently he has been overshadowed by his rival. His presidency will help bring Belarus closer to Russia but will alienate it from other countries.

Novikov's election as President will clearly damage Belarus' relations with every country including Russia, where anti-Communist sentiments remain quite strong.

Other candidates have yet to specify their foreign policies. They can considerably improve their chances by offering an adequate, clear, down-to-earth outline of Belarus' foreign policy.

7. Psychologically, the candidate's determination to carry through their programmes is extremely important. The incoherence of the present government deprives it of the future. The government is engaged in stop-gap measures and is abjectly incapable of anything that requires a continuous effort.

8. There is no simple answer to whether the programmes suggested by the candidates are outdated or not.

In the long run, this factor will determine whether the president will manage to carry his presidency through to the end.

Tension in Belarus is high and the system may get out of control at any moment. Kebich has already named a prospective suicide President.



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* The list of candidates has been supplemented by their short biographies - MEN editorial board.

Consulting in foreign country



Michael MOSS works as a Public Relations consultant for the International Finance Corporation. His job in Belarus is to make sure that as many people as possible are informed about privatization.

Working as a consultant in a foreign country means that everyday you have to solve problems related to language and culture. There are three things that you have to have if you want to be a good consultant: diplomacy, ingenuity, and patience.

I have found that knowing about the history, culture and the economic and political situation in a country is crucial to successful cooperation when working abroad. Knowledge about these topics gives one tools to understand the people with which one is working. Without these tools, you must assume that everyone sees the world in the same way as you do. Fortunately, we don't all see the world the same way, which is what makes working in a foreign culture so interesting.

One of the biggest mistakes you can make as a consultant while working in a foreign country is thinking that your ideas are automatically the best. In order to make change and implement new ideas, one should strive to incorporate one's ideas with the realities of the cul-

ture where one is working. We have found, for instance, that some of the best advertisements we have made have been developed through cooperation with the local consultants. Their input gave the advertisement feeling that was culture specific, which of course made it more appealing.

I remember one of the hardest things that we had to remember when we arrived in Belarus was to always address people by their first names and their patronymics. The patronymic form, of course, does not exist in English, and sometimes we inadvertently upset people by becoming so informal so quickly. We also learned quickly how to respect lunch. People have very strong feelings about the lunch break here. In the US, lunch is flexible, can happen any time during the middle of the day, and is often eaten at one's desk. Here we found that trying to organize a meeting at lunch time is not appreciated. The answer was to eat lunch too. We cannot change everyone else to agree to our habits, so we changed ours.

On the other hand, we have been able to adapt to the culture and work with it for positive results. For instance, a cultural "tool" that is only now being truly recognized in the U.S. is networking. Meeting people and knowing people from lots of different specialties is a powerful social tool, which is well understood in Belarus. We have learned time and again that the best way to find a specialist is to ask one of the contacts in the local city. We found our photographer through a local consultant, a computer scientist through our translator, and a driver through our secretary. Using 'networking' we have formed many long-lasting business relationships in Belarus.

It has been my experience working on this project, that ingenuity has also been very important. Everyday, we are told that something is impossible or has never been done before. This may well be true, however, the problem still had to be solved. For instance, we had a problem getting documents from one place to another around the country. Hiring a taxi to take documents somewhere is expensive. The postal service sometimes takes too long. What to do? We found that the Belarussian bus system provides excellent delivery service. The busses run regularly and on time. They are also relatively quick - we can send a document from one end of Belarus to the other in 10-12 hours.

Along these lines, we have found what we call the "narrow-specialization" syndrome. This means that we can find a company that will make signs for us, but do not have paper on which to make them. Or, a photographer who takes great photographs, but needs film and developing materials. When we put materials together with producers, we get great final products. As a result, when we arrive at a city, one of the first things we inevitably do is to collect information about where to buy film and light-bulbs, and wood, and paper, and on and on. This kind of problem solving has helped us many times.

The changes and ideas that we are trying to introduce are big, because they effect society at a day-to-day level. Small-scale privatization puts the power to own and run a business in the hands of individuals. Such a fundamental social change will not happen overnight. The key is to remember that, and to be patient. Every change that is made has to have time to establish itself as normal. Having said that, patience must also then take the form of insistence. Once a decision is made, it becomes our responsibility to make sure that it is implemented. Sometimes that means going back to people again and again to make sure that everyone is doing what they have agreed to do.



By Roman YAKOVLEVSKY

The ex-speaker of the Belarusian Parliament Mr. Stanislaw Shushkevich has decided to return to the political arena. As is known, Belarus is looking forward to its first ever presidential elections.

Last January Shushkevich had experienced forced resignation as a speaker of the Parliament. Stanislaw Shushkevich often commented that he had entered political life too late. On the wave of Gorbachev's perestroika, he was elected a People's Deputy of the USSR in 1989. One year later he became a Deputy of the Belarusian Parliament.

Shushkevich's life has inseparably been linked with Minsk ever since he was born on 15 December 1934. His father was a famous Belarusian writer who was subjected to repression in 1930s. He did not come back from the Stalin purge camps until 1956. His mother worked at the Polish editorial office of Belarusian radio. Thanks to her Stanislaw Shushkevich is fluent in the Polish language.

The would-be speaker displayed an inclination for electrical engineering since his childhood. In 1956 he graduated from the Physics and Mathematics Department of the Belarusian University. While Vice-rector of the his alma-mater, Stanislaw Shushkevich, a doctor of technical sciences, went into politics.

Before his scientific activities in the domain of nuclear electronics he worked as an engineer at the Minsk Radio Engineering Plant for some time. According to recent revelations, during that period Shushkevich was familiar with Lee Harvey Oswald, President John F. Kennedy's assassin. Mr Shushkevich is known to have taught him Russian at the same plant.

In his years as a student, Shushkevich was considered the best motor sportsman of the University. They say he was one of the first in town who owned a scooter. The spectrum of his hobbies also embraces photography, collecting card packs, playing the piano, accordion and domra (a Russian stringed folk instrument). Shushkevich likes cooking and, as he puts it, enjoys a square meal. As for spirits he prefers vodka. Shushkevich's character utterly corresponds to his zodiac sign of Sagittarius: impulsive, explosive, sharp-tongued but not malevolent.

Shushkevich has a daughter, who now teaches at the Conservatoire. According to Mr Shushkevich's assurances, he and his daughter have a relationship of mutual

understanding. Before his second marriage professor Shushkevich stayed at the Student's Hall of Residence leaving his flat to his first family. After Shushkevich got married for the second time he fathered a son Stanislaw who now goes to school.

Following the abortive August coup of 1991 the frightened parliamentary majority elected Stanislaw Shushkevich speaker of the Parliament. It must be mentioned that Premier Kebich was his main rival during the voting proceedings. Then in December 1991 Shushkevich as well as Russian and Ukrainian presidents got together in the Belavezhsкая Puscha (White tower dense forest) and proclaimed the Commonwealth of Independent States. Eye-witness say that the demise of the Soviet Union was marked by Moldovian brandy rather than well-known Belavezhsкая herb liqueur.

As the situation in Russia worsened in 1992-1993, Belarusian parliamentary calls for denunciation of the Belavezhsкая agreement and Shushkevich's resignation were going from strength to strength. The speaker advocated neutral status for Belarus and, therefore, came out opposed to the CIS treaty on collective security. However, he was in the minority on this and other issues.

In December 1993 on the next day after his best birthday wishes the parliamentary majority drove Shushkevich to hypertonic crisis. One month later in January 1994 President Bill Clinton paid a visit to Minsk. He openly supported the Reformatory Deal of Stanislaw Shushkevich. Ten days after Clinton left Minsk, the Supreme Soviet of Belarus sent its speaker to resignation for confusing the parliamentary activities and, allegedly, overstepping his authority.

According to Shushkevich, Churchill, who in his time managed to come back to power in a similar episode, serves as an inspiration for him. While running for presidency Shushkevich was supported by social democrats, liberals and some trade unions. As per sociological findings he is popular with women, youth, intelligentsia and a certain part of the military. His image is also recognized on the international scene. At present Shushkevich is director of the Political and Economic Investigation Centre at the Non-state European Humanitarian University. Professor Mikhailov, a former adviser to Shushkevich, is Rector of the University.

A way with the new place

As any other big city Minsk has quite a number of places known to every local but hidden from the eyes of foreign visitors. As a guide and adviser in a foreign city we would like to tell you more about the Minsk club of music fans.

Every Sunday noon the foyer of the VILNIUS cinema in Minsk attracts music fans from all over the place hoping to buy, sell or exchange their CDs, LPs or tapes.

Available at the club are

Russian and Western -made CDs at \$3-5 and \$7-10, respectively. Western compact disks are nevertheless no better than Russian. However, the choice of classical music is rather narrow. Rock, pop and jazz are far better represented CDs being priced at \$10-18 apiece.

The club normally assembles up to 100 music fans each paying an admission fee of BRB2,000.

Before buying a CD visitors are recommended to make sure

that it has not been produced illicitly somewhere in the ex-Soviet Union. In addition to the obvious moral scruples involved one should bear in mind that most such CDs have been re-recorded from ordinary LPs, hence the poor quality. The deficient printing of the inlay card whose perfect colouring standards remain inaccessible to the Russian bootleggers is what exposes an illicit product.

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Getting the writing right: English in print



Judging by a quantity of the copies sold at newsstands we may assume that MEN has become popular with native speakers and students alike. **Simon INGRAM-HILL**, a coordinator of the British Council in Minsk, has kindly agreed to give lessons to those who study English.

Considering the lack of exposure to English in Belarus - there is not much access through the media, whether newspapers, (except MEN!), radio or TV programmes - it has continually impressed me, how fluent so many Belarusians are in English. I don't mean to flatter - but to make an observation after one year working here in Minsk.

And to prove that I don't wish to flatter, I shall make a second observation - that the ability to speak is more impressive than skill in writing. Although individual sentences are often grammatically accurate, problems may occur once sentences are strung together in larger chunks of text, in paragraphs and, dare I say it, in newspaper columns or reports.

Let me illustrate what I mean by looking at some examples of problem passages I have come across over the last year in texts in Belarus.

Example 1: "Under the existing agreement the company is the responsible body. Alternatively the new plan aims to set up several organizing branches."

In this example (I've changed all examples slightly so nobody will recognize the writer) the word "alternatively" is wrongly used to introduce a new situation. "Alternatively", however, suggests that a choice of two

different possibilities is being offered. Take these examples:

"You can take the bus. Alternatively, you can go by tram." and "I could meet you at the bar. Alternatively, I could come to your place." In both examples the words "or else" could equally well be substituted. Alternatively (!) one could use "either" or "or". It is the "or" which emphasises the two possibilities here. Going back to the original example, clearly the author wanted to introduce the idea of contrast, rather than choice, and would have been better off using the expression "however".

Let's look a little more closely at how CONTRAST can be expressed in English. One familiar way is by using the phrase "on the other hand" But look what has happened here!

Example 2: "The official attitude was negative. On the other hand, his private opinion was an unmistakable 'no'."

The writer's difficulty here is that there are two different factors, but they both point in the same direction, to the same conclusion. So there is no contrast, no alternative viewpoint being offered. "Also" or "In addition" would have been correct. "On the other hand" should only be used to introduce a second contrasted situation, as in the example that fol-

lows:

"It is said that Belarusians are friendly. On the other hand British people have the reputation of being more reserved."

It is possible but not necessary to make the contrast more obvious by introducing "on the one hand" in the first sentence.

EG "On the one hand it is said that Belarusians are friendly. On the other (hand) British people are said to be unfriendly."

Alternatively, the two sentences could be joined in one by the use of "while" or "whereas" instead of "on the other hand".

But be careful, although "by contrast" could be used in this context, "On the contrary" can only be used, as it implies, when you want to CONTRADICT the truth of a previous statement. Going back to our example, you could write (truthfully, I hope)

"The British have the reputation of being reserved. On the contrary, my recent visit to Britain underlined their friendliness."

There are many other ways of expressing contrast in English, including "however", "nevertheless", "all the same", "but", "yet", "even so", "in spite of". You can find them listed in many good grammars as expressions of contrast. The problem, though, is that they are not synonymous. Some like "but" and "however" work well in most contexts, which is why they appear so frequently in both spoken and written English.

"But" together with "and" and "so" have been described as the bread and butter co-ordinating conjunctions. They were the favourites of Presi-

dent Bush whose excessive use of them "seemed to give all his ideas equal value." Analysis of 109 of his formal (ie written) addresses shows rare use of the more sophisticated co-ordinating conjunctions such as "however", "therefore" (or "moreover"), but he did once use "nevertheless".

So, not to be outdone by a former President, how do we use "nevertheless"?

EG The situation was difficult, nevertheless they refused to abandon their policy.

"nevertheless" admits the truth of the preceding statement, but discounts its effect.

Anyhow, (or is it anyway?) let's move on. But not too far. Here is a final example of an inappropriate co-ordination.

Example 3: "Academics should attend international conferences. Anyhow, many manage to become authorities without overseas recognition"

We are still in the world of contrasts. "However", "nevertheless" "even so" would both be acceptable in the above example. But not "Anyhow", which is used to dismiss or devalue the ideas which precede it. In this example the use of the word "should" in the first sentence tells us that the writer does not want to dismiss the idea at all.

Because of the rather casual relation between the sentences implied by "anyhow", the word is used more commonly in speech than in writing, where the relationship between ideas is less logical, and the tone less formal.

EG "The discussions will take a long time, and we may not know the results for many months. Anyhow, I'll

keep you informed as to their progress."

Anyhow basically implies "I don't care what was said before, it does not matter to me" Thus: "What an awful time we had. Anyhow we are safe".

Enough of these logical connectors. I'll just leave you with a short quiz you can try in a spare moment.

Finally a small plea for a re-consideration of a much-loved word: "variant". Within days of arriving in Belarus, I had been offered by kind friends numerous "variants" over my future accommodation arrangements. I could advertise in a newspaper, see a particular agent, look at the flats that my hosts had earmarked for me, knock on the door of flat in a block of flats I liked the look of and then negotiate and so on. I understood exactly what was meant for the word "variant" does exist in English and means what my interlocutors meant it to mean. But in standard English it is not commonly USED. We would talk about "alternatives" or various possibilities. "Variants" are part of a more specialist vocabulary.

Another time perhaps we can look at levels of formality in speech and writing. When can we say "to my mind" and when just simply "I think." Is there a place for the splendid but almost obsolete verb "opine". Sadly not, in my opinion look (though not "to my mind")

Quiz

nevertheless/alternative ly/on the other hand/anyhow however/in contrast/on the contrary

Which of these words would you use in the blank spaces in these sentences?

1. We know he is very

busy. we would be grateful if he could help us.

2. We could fight inflation. we could create new jobs.

3. Inflation soared. life continued and people managed to cope.

4. Clinton can speak in paragraphs. Bush had a preference for single sentences

5. It may not be a good policy. it may lead to disaster.

6. In his inaugural speech Bush began 11% of his sentences with "and". Eisenhower used it four times in his and President Kennedy only twice.

7. It's not a particularly good apartment. it's cheap.

8. They might speak at any of the meetings. they may not speak at all.

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Answers. (upside down)

8. alternatively, on the other hand
7. however, on the other hand
6. in contrast, on the other hand
5. on the contrary
4. in contrast, on the other hand
3. nevertheless, however
2. alternatively, on the other hand
1. nevertheless, however



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"EXPORT PROCEDURE OF STRATEGIC COMMODITIES"

has been adopted by the Council of Ministers. The enactment envisages that Belarusian economic enterprises are allowed to export critical commodities, listed by the Russian Federation. This is provided that these enterprises are registered at the Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations in Russia by the Belarusian Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations. This will be in effect as soon as the monetary union between Belarus and Russia comes into force.

THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF BELARUS

has taken the decision to augment the State Tax Inspection by 3,050 employees in 1994-1995 including by

THE BELARUSIAN PEN CENTRE

a non-governmental writers' organisation, held an international congress in conjunction with the Soros Foundation - Belarus from May 18 to May 20 in Minsk. The focus of the event was "Post-totalitarian society: individual and nation".

EINDHOVEN, HOLLAND AND MINSK

have decided to establish twin town links.

THE BELARUSIAN MILITARY DELEGATION

headed by Lieutenant-General Nikolai Churkin, chairman of the

tion, a 10-day trip on horseback is ready to begin for tourists who have never mounted a horse before. Lovers of the exotic pastime will be taught how to get in the saddle, ride and handle and care for their horses.

THREE EXHIBITIONS

are still on display in the Art House. They reflect a gamut of contemporary Belarusian art. One exhibition displays realist landscape paintings, sketches of countryside life, Polesye motifs in drawings and paintings by A.Los and traditional paintings by V.Zholtak. The second - "Dark Blue Space" is another joint exhibition depicting the more avant-garde tendencies of both S.Kiruschenko whose paintings are made of indigo shapes common for archaic character and T.Sokolova whose blue ceramic work illustrates her talent with archaic and cubism portraying realism through symbolism. The third exhibition displays children's pieces which concentrate on the theme of Easter.

A DROP IN INFECTIOUS MORBIDITY RATE THIS APRIL

compared to last April has been reported by Minsk City Sanitary Inspection. However, some diseases are still of great concern. The sanitary authorities have officially recorded the following: salmonellosis (63 cases), scabies (235), rubella (5,384), diphtheria (2 cases including one virus-carrier) and malaria (1).

THE FIRST MOBILE BANK

is to appear in Vera Khoruzhaya street in Minsk. A mini-bank will carry out hard currency and rouble operations for the public. If needed it can be readily "dismantled" and put in a container and then taken to any other place in town. Twenty more mini-banks exported by Poland are likely to go up in Minsk and other cities in the near future.

RESEARCH WORKERS

of the science academy presidium and other academic institutions had to take a two-week leave without pay. Scientific research work has been suspended due to insufficient funds, a problem which has become a regular occurrence for our economy. The 1994 state budget allocated to the Academy will barely last 6 months.

LEONID LEVIN, A WELL-KNOWN BELARUSIAN ARCHITECT,

has started work on a monument dedicated to the children who per-

ished in World War II and the Chernobyl disaster. This idea has found the support of the German company "Grieger Mallison" which is located in Belarus. It has given the architect DM 50,000 for the project. The estimated cost of erecting the monument runs into several billion roubles.

"EUROPE NOSTRA" EMBLEM

has been fixed above the entrance door of a restored tower of the Mir

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of incomplete construction projects has been piled up in Belarus based on the prices as of December 1993. Last year the costs of buildings and installations on average went up by 24.2 times, transmission devices - by 38 times, metal-cutting lathes - by 63.9 times. As a result, the value of state property was set too high. In fact, it is much higher than the same indicators of other CIS countries. Such conditions hinder the progress of real estate property in this country.



An international car show has been held at the Minsk Exposition Centre, MINSKEXPO. Most of the cars on display were sold outright in the showroom.

A SMALL GOLDEN MEDAL

has been given to the Russian and Belarusian scientists who have elaborated an "Inventing Machine" intellectual programme system at the Geneva 22nd International Exhibition of Invention, New Technologies and Products. This is the sixth golden medal attained by the 5-year-old "Inventing Machine" at the largest world exhibition events.

THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

announces that, effective 15 May 1994, citizens of Belarus will be charged for visas to the United States. The visas fees will be the same as those currently charged to United States citizens for Belarusian visas. Single-entry visas will cost \$60, transit visas will cost \$20, and multiple-entry visas will cost \$300. Diplomats and officials travelling on government business will continue to receive visas at no charge.

Information compiled from Belarusian newspaper and information agency sources.



The Minsk AMKODOR joint-stock company specialising in road construction machinery has produced Belarus' first IKARUS-AMKODOR bus as a result of a joint project with its Hungarian partners.

1,600 employees in 1994. Another 1,450 employees are planned to be added in 1995. The Council of Ministers has also decided on a car limit for the State Tax Inspection which makes up 37 vehicles.

MIKHAIL MARINICH

the first deputy chairman of the state committee for foreign economic relations may leave his position very soon. The Council of Ministers has put forward Marinich as Ambassador to the Czech Republic. He might also combine the position of Ambassador to the Slovak Republic and Hungary. The decision is to be passed by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.

THE CHILEAN AMBASSADOR JAMES HOLGER

has presented his credentials to Vyacheslav Kuznetsov, a deputy speaker of the Belarusian Parliament.

THE FIRST SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL CENTRE

for testing the quality and safety of food has opened at the Medical Advanced Studies Institute in Minsk.

MATRIMONIAL TROUBLES

are an issue of great concern in Belarus. 6 out of 10 marriages in Belarus end in separation or divorce. However, in Minsk 7.5 out of 10 marriages end in separation or divorce: 95% filing for divorce in the courts. This accounts for the large number of single-parent families in Belarus.

Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Belarusian Armed Forces, visited the United States of America. According to the Defense Ministry press centre, the Belarusian servicemen's objective was to familiarize themselves with the functions and missions of the US Army National Guard and reserve units.

A FOURTH MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AUCTION

has been held in Brest. 5 privatised enterprises have been sold and one has gone for lease for a sum of BRB 986 mln. The three preceding auctions had an average selling price of BRB 822,000 per square metre. However, it is now almost 1.4 mln "rabbits".

THE FIRST HORSE TRAIL

has been blazed in Kletsk District, Minsk Region. According to the Belarusian horse-breeding associa-



Capsules with soldiers' names have been buried in the Trinity Suburb, in historic downtown Minsk. These soldiers perished during local wars and military conflicts during the period of 1979-1989.

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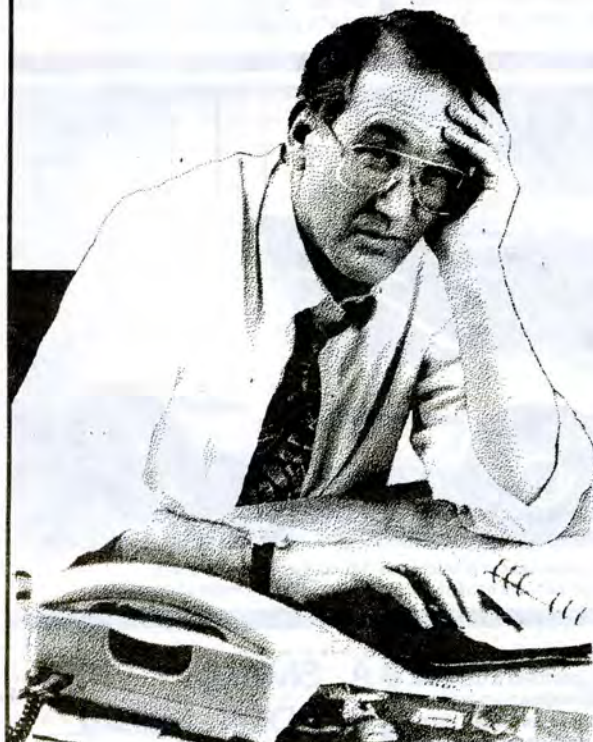
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I. Alovnikov (piano).
- May 29. State Symphony Orchestra of Belarus
Adagio from Symphony No. 10: Mahler.
Symphony No. 5: Shostakovich.
Director and Lead Conductor V. Dubrovsky,
Conductor - D. Pahnelt (Germany)

Chamber Hall

- May 26. Presentation of French Organ Music.
Selection from Videur, Dupres, Dukas.
Presented by V. Savitskaja.
- May 28. Chamber Music Concert.
Pieces by Franck, Bokkerini, Sen-Sans,
Tchaikovsky.
Y. Feshchenko (cello), A. Sobolev (piano)
- June 3. New Belarusian Quartet.
Jesus Christ's Last Seven Words and
Quartets: Composition 51 No. 1-7: Haydn.
Quartet No. 9: Composition 59 No. 3: Beethoven.
Quartet: No. 13, Composition 29 No. 1: Schubert.
- June 7. Piano Music Concert.
Sonata D Major: Haydn. Eight Pictorial
Impressions: Metner. Goldberg-Variations: Bach.
- June 9-10. Organ Duet.
Selections from Bach, Handel, Mozart, Albinoni,
and others.
Ludmila Laruk, Vitaly Pivnov.

BELARUS BOLSHOI

- May 27. Sleeping Beauty: Tchaikovsky.
May 28. Romance Evening - At Noisy Ball: Tchaikovsky.
May 29. Beware of the Witch (matinee): Pleshak. Romeo
and Juliette: Prokofiev.
- May 31. Concert of the Belarusian State Choreography
School
- June 1. Don Quixote: Mincus.
June 3. The Nutcracker: Tchaikovsky.
June 4. The Barber of Seville: Rossini.
June 5. The Swan Lake: Tchaikovsky.
June 7. Traviata: Verdi.
June 8. Corsar: Adan.
June 9. Mozart and Salieri: Rimsky-Corsakov.
Shakhrezade: Rimsky-Corsakov.
June 10. Carmina Burana: Orff.
Carmen-Suite: Bizet - Shchedrin.
June 11. Evgeny Onegin: Tchaikovsky.
June 12. Evgeny Onegin: Tchaikovsky.

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Vienna-Minsk	2,4,7	13.55	16.55	B2 900
Minsk-Zurich	3,7	10.30	12.15	B2 869
Zurich-Minsk	3,7	13.15	17.00	B2 870
Minsk-Berlin	1,3,5	10.00	10.50	B2 891
Berlin-Minsk	1,3,5	11.50	14.35	B2 892
Minsk-Frankfurt	1,3	12.10	14.00	B2 893
Minsk-Frankfurt	5	11.45	13.35	B2 893
Frankfurt-Minsk	1,3	14.55	18.40	B2 894
Frankfurt-Minsk	5	14.35	18.20	B2 894
Minsk-Warsaw	2,6	12.30	12.50	B2 895
Minsk-Warsaw	3	11.00	11.20	B2 895
Warsaw-Minsk	2,6	13.50	16.10	B2 896
Warsaw-Minsk	3	12.20	14.40	B2 896
Minsk-Shannon	1,5	07.05	09.00	B2 897
Shannon-New-York	1,5	14.00	16.00	E1105
New-York-Shannon	6,4	18.45	08.45	E1104
Shannon-Minsk	1,5	10.30	16.00	B2 898
Minsk-Tel-Aviv	4,7	10.00	13.50	B2 1447
Tel-Aviv-Minsk	4,7	15.00	19.00	B2 1448

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